

MEDICAL RELIEF, DISPENSARIES (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 8 February 1867;—for,

COPY "of REPORT of John Lambert, Esq., Poor Law Inspector, to the Right Honourable Gathorne Hardy, M.P., President of the Poor Law Board, dated the 9th day of November 1866, on the SYSTEM of MEDICAL RELIEF to the OUT-DOOR POOR in Ireland under the Dispensaries Act, 1851."

Poor Law Board,
8th February 1867.

RALPH A EARLE,
Secretary.

REPORT of John Lambert, Esq., Poor Law Inspector, to the Right Honourable Gathorne Hardy, M.P., President of the Poor Law Board, dated the 9th of November 1866, on the SYSTEM of MEDICAL RELIEF to the OUT-DOOR POOR in Ireland under the Dispensaries Act, 1851.

Poor Law Board, Whitehall, S.W.,
9th November 1866.

Sir,

I beg to inform you that, in conformity with your desire, I made inquiry during my recent visit to Ireland into the system of out-door medical relief now in force in that country.

This system, as you are aware, was established in pursuance of the 14 & 15 Vict. c. 68., usually known as "The Dispensaries Act, 1851."

The Irish Poor Relief Act of 1838 (1 & 2 Vict. c. 56.) contained no provision for the medical relief of the out-door poor, but by section 5 of the 10 Vict. c. 31. the Poor Law Commissioners were authorized to require the Guardians to appoint medical officers for the purpose of affording medical relief out of the workhouse in those cases in which it should appear necessary and expedient that such appointments should be made.

It appears, however, that 19 orders only were issued under the powers conferred by this section.

These orders were addressed to the Guardians of 16 Unions, and applied to 29 districts, comprising 104 electoral divisions, for which 29 medical officers were authorized to be appointed.

By the Dispensaries Act of 1851 the guardians of each union are required, when so ordered by the Poor Law Commissioners, to divide the union into so many dispensary districts as may appear necessary, regard being had to the extent and population of each district; and the cost of all medical relief within the district, together with all salaries and expenses incidental to the same, is made a charge upon the several electoral divisions within the district, according to the ratable value of the property therein. Moreover, the Commissioners are authorised to fix the number and qualifications of the dispensary officers, and to declare the number of persons who shall constitute the dispensary committee.

The dispensary committee are to consist of the *ex officio* and elected guardians

resident